

Arlington Council on Aging
Meeting Minutes October 15, 2020

Present: Michael Quinn, Pat Baillieul, Anne Brown, Rick Fentin, Kristine Shah, Jill Greenlee, Mary Hung, and Marge Vanderhill. Also in attendance: Ashley Cheetham, a social worker intern at the COA and Joe Curro, Select Board liaison.

Associates: Bob Tosi, Paul Raia, and Karen Nichols.
ASA representative: Malcolm Hamilton

Minutes taken by Jill Greenlee

Public meetings are conducted remotely due to the COVID pandemic. This meeting was recorded.

Call to order: The regular meeting of the Council on Aging Board was called to order by Michael Quinn via Zoom at 6:02

Citizens open forum: no one

Minutes approval: Question about the minutes from Michael about 26 Crosby. Rick Fentin asked that the spelling of his name be corrected
Moved to approve: Rick Fentin offered the motion; Anne Brown seconded.
The minutes were approved by unanimous consent.

**4. Executive Director's Report
Updates on Programs/Services**

Nutrition and Food Access

- i. Arlington EATS – this partnership continues to thrive.
- ii. The Farm Share Program has benefited 50 older adults.
- iii. About 100 people will get Thanksgiving meals. This year will come from a new partnership that should produce a really great meal. There also will be fresh flowers and desserts. The retired Men's club will help with delivery. Folks will pull up to the circle driveway and the hot food will be placed in the trunks of cars. The delivery will be contactless to safety. Volunteer outreach will happen soon.
- iv. The COA is now a recertified SNAP location for all ages.

Staying Connected and Supporting Older Residents

- i. Fitness classes remain really popular.
- ii. The COA is staying connected with about 100 people per week across a range of classes, information sessions, grab-and-gos, etc.

- iii. COA is a fuel assistance certified location and is a contact for folks of all ages who would like help applying for fuel assistance.
 - iv. Shine volunteers are helping with virtual open enrollment sessions and also taking one on one counseling sessions.
- The flu vaccines are also being administered through the COA. Next week the COA will go to different buildings in town to administer shots. COA also partnered with Walgreens on Oct 20 for outdoor flu clinics with high dose vaccines.

Transportation

- i. Use has gone up again. Van use and taxi company partnerships are getting folks to appointments.
- ii. The volunteer medical appointment program is still on hold to ensure the safety of volunteers. If folks have recommendations as to how to help individuals who have had a medical procedure with anesthesia, the COA is in need of creative solutions.

Grant Updates

- i. Chromebooks are coming! Volunteers needed to help seniors figure out how to use the Chromebooks. This is a great opportunity to share with folks.
- ii. The COA is applying for smaller technology grants to get more Chromebooks and hotspots.
- iii. Sanborn Foundation have again given us a \$46,000 grant us to continue funding for cancer related transportation for all Arlington Residents.

Property Tax & Rent Relief Programs

- i. Applications have been updated and are available on the COA website for the 2020-21 Volunteer Tax Work off Program (Deadline October 15) and the Elderly and Disabled Tax Relief Fund (Deadline January 31).
- ii. We were able to add back the Harry Barber program for renters thanks to advocacy. This provides the opportunity for older adults to volunteer for 125 hours in exchange for a \$1,500 check toward their rent. All of the jobs will be virtual
- iii. Rick Fentin and Michael Quinn will host a Zoom info session on Property Tax Deferral on November 12 at 6pm.

Other

- i. Construction continues. The COA team have done a great job being remote.
- ii. There have been 50-60 applicants who have received relief from the Arlington COVID-19 Relief fund. This totaled almost \$100,000 to residents. The COA social workers sit on that committee and it's been a huge benefit to seniors who have become financially vulnerable (or more vulnerable) because of the pandemic. There will be another round of funding soon. The stream of applicants is fairly steady. This is often

the first point of contact with services in Arlington, so this process connects folks with Arlington EATS, fuel assistance, etc.

iii. Our February meeting focused on next steps for Age Friendly, but the pandemic uprooted that process. The COA has been working to keep Age Friendly in mind and moving forward. The COA work in the past several months as had to address in all 8 areas of Age Friendly, as the COA pivots to meet new challenges and emerging needs. The COA has a new social work intern, Ashely Cheetham, who will work on this through the spring (possibly through the summer). Thinking about next steps, Kristine will email the 8 areas to all the board members will report back with the 2-3 areas that are of greatest concern/interest.

iv. Questions: The capitol campaign Is still on-going. Thus far the effort has raised \$138,000 (the goal is \$300,000). There will be another appeal going out. There is particularly a need to make the center more ‘high tech’ and ensure that people who might want to engage remotely moving forward, and this can be part of the appeal. There was discussion about other opportunities to raise funds. There are opportunities to approach corporate entities in town to see if they would give to the capital campaign. Also, creating a wall of donors or plaques might be a good idea. If anyone is interested in serving on the steering committee for this, please let Kristine know.

5. Report of the Chair – The select board and the town manager’s office were very responsive to the Harry Barber request.

6. Minuteman Senior Services Report: Marge Vanderhill was not present, so we’ll get a report next month.

7. ASA Liaison Report: Malcolm Hamilton offered a report, first praising Kristine’s excellent work in taking the reins of the COA. The ASA space is currently un-useable due to the construction.

8. Old Business

a. Open Board Member Position(s) – The position has been posted. It will be advertised in the November newsletter; folks should reach out to town residents who might be a good fit. There was a past applicant who we might reach out to that person.

i. Vote on Associate Member – we can’t yet vote for Paul’s nomination to serve as an associate member. We’ll take a vote at the next meeting.

b. Age Friendly Next Steps

9. New Business – Rick Fentin wrote a piece in the Boston Globe last week about tax deferral programs.

10. Adjourned at 6:52. Mary Hung moved to adjourn; Jill Greenlee seconded the motion.

Next meeting: November 19, 2020